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NEWS RELEASE

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Statement by Gov. Christie Whitman and Transportation Commissioner Haley Supporting Congressman Shuster's ISTEA Extension

"Today, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bud Shuster offered a bill which extends ISTEA funding for another six months," Governor Christie Whitman said. "In doing so, Chairman Shuster took a significant step in the debate over reauthorization of transportation funding."

"The six-month extension will keep federal transportation funds flowing while a compromise to achieve higher long-term funding levels can be made compatible with the balanced budget agreement," Whitman said. "I am pleased to hear that the process is moving forward and the interruption to the flow of federal highway and transit funds will be minimized. If Chairman Shuster is eventually successful in his efforts, New Jersey's economy, infrastructure and environment would be greatly enhanced over the next six years."

Transportation Commissioner John J.Haley said under the extension New Jersey will benefit from an increase in funding over 1997 authorization levels.

"Over the next six months the House Transportation Committee will be working closely with congressional leadership and the budget committee to ensure that the "Building Efficient Surface Transportation Equity Act's" (BESTEA) six-year funding levels are included in the blue print of a balanced budget," Haley said. "As amended today, BESTEA will tie any authorizations above the levels assumed in the budget agreement to new revenues and will not be made available unless budget agreement deficit targets are met."

Whitman and Haley said they will continue to work with the New Jersey Congressional Delegation to further promote New Jersey's critical transportation needs.

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